

A Catalogue of Professional Humours

(Ed. Note: The following article originally appeared in the University of Toronto Varsity).

Much effort has been expended, and in most cases wasted, in attempts to categorize the various types of university students. What is urgently needed at the present time is a comprehensive and careful study along similar lines dealing with the different types of professors, and the student reaction to them. The work must be authoritative and well researched.

This is definitely not it. Nonetheless, we feel it is our duty to make our meagre and distorted contribution to this new and expanding facet of social research.

Years ago, the whole problem was much simpler. Professors were of two types — absent-minded or intolerable. But those carefree days are past; there are now thousands of types of professors.

For the purposes of this study we have chosen various stereotypes of professors. I must state at the outset that any resemblance between any of these stereotypes and any individuals now living, or thought to be living, is purely accidental. Should any such accidents occur, the names have been omitted to protect the author.

Our first type is the professor who really doesn't give a damn about teaching; what he is really interested in is his research. This research is usually in some field having no connection to the course he is teaching. He is roughly as enthusiastic about his lectures as he is about getting polio shots.

His method of lecturing identifies him immediately. He enters the room at 12½ minutes after the hour, strides to the front, and clasps his hands behind his back. Lowering his chin till it rests on his chest, he begins to mumble; soon his eyes close. One cannot discern whether he is mumbling or snoring. It makes little difference, as he is not audible past the second row.

The student reaction is very normal; during his first two lectures, they read the Varsity or Mad. During the third, some start to play bridge, and in the fourth, attendance drops sharply to about 20 per cent of the first lecture. The professor cancels the lecture and is very happy.

Very close to this type, but with distance, though subtle difference, is the never-change-the notes professor. This sort of professor wrote a set of lecture notes fifteen years ago, and has not even considered changing them since. As a result, not only do the same jokes occur in precisely the same spots as the previous year, but they are naturally at least fifteen years old. Most of these professors make no efforts to conceal the fact that they are reading their lectures. If they had any sense they would simply cancel their lectures. Nevertheless, the lectures are invariably dryer than the

WCTU.

The student reaction in this case is exceedingly complex; it must be divided into two separate parts. Firstly, the students who are supposed to take these lectures react in the same manner as those in the previous section. However, the lecture hall is always full. The students who listen eagerly are students who have long since been promoted but have returned because they

by JOHN COWAN

forgot the punch line of some joke which is so antiquated that it is new again. Not realizing this, the lecturer believes that he is a resounding success. It is far better that way; faith is very important.

Next in line is the meek and frightened little fellow who is a professor because he is afraid to leave university. The ivory tower is his home; he cannot stand crowds and noise. On the outside, he feels he would be crushed in the throng. He dislikes and fears strangers almost by instinct. A group of strangers terrifies him. Naturally, delivering a lecture terrifies him. He is nervous and has an ulcer. When he has more than three lectures in one day, even his ulcer has an ulcer.

His lectures follow roughly this pattern: he enters two minutes early and hides himself behind the lectern. After a few moments of judiciously re-arranging his notes he begins, and despite a slight shakiness in his voice, he does quite well for

perhaps five or six minutes. Then the full horror of his situation hits him; he begins to speed up, and he no longer finishes his sentences. Each sentence trails off like smoke in the wind. He does not notice. At the end of the hour he flees without answering any questions. The hour has been an agony for him.

It was even worse for his students.

Now comes the personality boy; he once did an educational series for TV and has never forgotten it. He has made great efforts to be more entertaining in his lectures. He has learned how to act. In short, he has become a ham.

His style is quite distinctive, and he has probably picked up some hilarious nicknames as a result. He always smiles directly at the line where the rear wall and the ceiling of the lecture hall meet. This is difficult for him when he is writing on the board, but years of practice have enabled him to do all this, and keep a steady stream of puns

and mixed metaphors aimed at his audience at the same time.

The next professor will probably live for ever, because he is usually found to be quite full of a certain internal preservative. That his lectures should remain coherent under these influences is surprising enough; that they should be good lectures staggers the imagination. The professor also staggers.

Everyone enjoys his lectures; they are considered the best in the university, even if the subject matter is obscure.

Even the professor enjoys his own lectures; with a captive audience he can show his charming accent to his heart's content, providing he does not get too charming and pass out.

There are all sorts of strange professors I could deal with, providing my stomach were strong enough which it is not. There are those who could be replaced by mimeograph machines; all they do is write on the board anyhow. They do not condescend to speak to mortals. And if they did they would probably

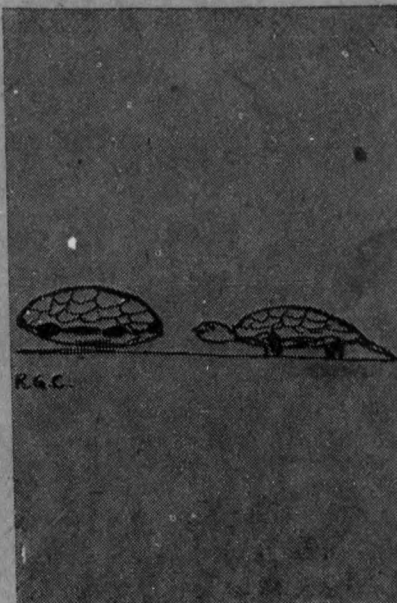
Socratic Society

The first meeting of the newly formed Socratic Society was held last Sunday evening in the basement recreation room of Bridges House. These meetings are open to both faculty and students interested in discussing problems of a philosophic nature.

The purpose of the Socratic Society is twofold. First, the holding of seminars once every two weeks at which time a member will present a paper on a problem of interest to him; and secondly to present opportunities for students and faculty to hear speeches of a controversial and technical nature.

Professor W. F. M. Stewart, will present a paper entitled "Rational Prediction" (on the problem of induction) at the second meeting of the group which is to be held Thursday, October 11, at 7:30.

The elected executive of the society are President, Douglas Hagerman, Vice Presidents Margaret Baird, John Kelly and refreshment convenor Jon Porter. Anyone interested in the work of the society is asked to contact one of the above.



All Right Then Be An Introvert

Friend: "What's your son taking up at college this year?"

Dear Old Dad: "Space. Nothing but Space."

Co-ed: "I thought you said your roommate was a Civil Engineer?"

Stude: "That's right."

Co-ed: "Well, he didn't act like it last nite!"

Invitation

The Ladies Society issues an open invitation to all coeds to tea in the Maggie Jean, Sunday, October 14. We particularly want to have all the town coeds present, both Fredericton natives and apartment dwellers. It is assured that the residence girls will turn out, as the tea will substitute for their evening meal.

In case there are any girls who have not yet been contacted by the telephone committees, the hours are from 4:30 to 6:30. If possible could any out of residence people who have not yet been phoned bring sandwiches or cakes. These are to be at the Maggie between 2:30 and 3:00. There will be girls on hand to receive them.

This is not a formal affair, to the extent that hats are not required. Please come and meet the rest of the coeds. This is your chance to meet the girls in residence if you live in town, and vice versa. All coeds welcome, be there.

Mother (upon entering room unexpectedly): "—Well, I never"—
Daughter—"Oh, but mother, you must have."

Rachel Carsons

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